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Parisa Hashempour

In 1988 Oprah Winfrey rolled out a now-notorious wagon of fat with her onto the stage of her talk show. The fat represented the weight she had lost on a liquid diet and the iconic moment highlights the accolade that goes along with shedding pounds. She was dressed in size ten jeans and the audience applauded as she triumphantly dragged her wagon onto stage. Oprah lost sixty-seven pounds over the summer of that year, but two weeks after returning to real food her weight shot back up. Through her public display and subsequent return to a heavier weight, she demonstrated the losing battle of women and weight-loss and its firmly rooted spot in the culture of the United States.

Img. 1: Oprah and her 'wagon of fat.' Source: O. Winfrey, 'Oprah's top 20 moments', *O, The Oprah Magazine* (October 2005).

As food historians such as Louise Foxcroft explain, the practice of dieting goes back over two thousand years.[1] The particular focus of my study is on the ways in which diet culture and its portrayal of women changed in the US in the period 1960-1989. Oprah's show aired at the end of this period, but the liquid diet had insidiously worked its way into advertising from the start of the 1960s. Throughout the course of this essay I aim to answer the question: why did representations of women in diet and weight loss adverts change from the 1960s to 1980s in the US? By looking at representations of women within these adverts, I analyse how far they reflected the changing social position of women. Oprah dragging out 'her fat' on live television would suggest that the pressure to maintain an idealized body form remained static - but in what ways had women's relationship with diet culture altered? It must be noted that some explanatory factors for change such as women's emancipation and sexual liberation jar with the very constraining nature of diet and weight loss' effect on women's bodies and thus liberty. In this way, my research may appear almost paradoxical. However, women had come a long way socially, economically and politically by the end of the thirty-year period. My essay aims to analyse how far this was reflected in diet and weight loss adverts.

A history of diet culture

As Mike Featherstone points out, 'one of the most noticeable features of the twentieth century […] has been the triumph of the thin woman over the fat woman.'[2] It seems he was not alone in his observation. A plethora of academics across a spectrum of disciplines have weighed in on the relationship between women, weight-loss and the role of the media. Authors such as Louise Foxcroft and Anne Scott Beller have looked more broadly at diet culture in history and specifically in the American context.[3] Both Susan Bordo and Sandra Bartky are prominent in their explorations of the ways in which diet and weight-loss culture poses a discourse of bodily

[1] L. Foxcroft, *Calories and Corsets: A History of Dieting over 2000 Years,* (London 2011).
[2] M. Featherstone, 'The body in consumer culture' in: M. Featherstone, M. Hepworth and B.S. Turner ed., *The Body: social process and cultural theory* (California 2011) 170-196.
[3] A.S. Beller, *Fat and Thin: A Natural History of Obesity* (New York 1977); Foxcroft, *Calories and Corsets.*

control over women – a common theme in academic literature.[4] Some academics have looked explicitly at the gendered elements of advertising.[5] These authors tout women's emancipation as a defining factor of change. This is echoed in this essay, for example in the finding that the increasing presence of female voiceovers and also the declining fashion of using a voiceover at all might be explained in part by women's increased emancipation.

However, this study is unique in its comparison of the two specific periods of the 1960s and 1980s as well as in its use of television commercials in order to do so. Previous researchers have looked at the transitions of diet culture in the second half of the twentieth century more generally, focusing in particular on changes such as the move from personal to collective weight loss.[6] Instead, my study looks specifically at changing representations and portrayals of women in this period. The use of television commercials as a visual tool of measuring change is crucial to this analysis. Despite being easily accessible online, little research has been undertaken into the changing details of diet and weight-loss television commercials over this time. As this was an era of significant social change, I believe that collecting data on the advertisements in either period will greatly enhance our understandings of diet culture and the changing portrayal of women.

[4] S. Bartky, *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression*, (New York 1990); S. Bordo, *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley 2003).

[5] D. Barthel, *Putting on Appearances: Gender and Advertising* (Philadelphia 1998), 1; A. Zimmerman & J. Dahlberg, 'The Sexual Objectification of Women in Advertising', *Journal of Advertising Research,* 48.1 (2008); K. Banks-Nutter, 'From Romance to PMS: Images of Women and Chocolate in Twentieth Century America' in: K. LeBesco & P. Naccarato ed., *Edible Ideologies: Representing Food and Meaning* (New York 2008).

[6] See: C.J. Thompson & E.C. Hirschman, 'Understanding the socialized body: A poststructuralist analysis of consumers self-conceptions, body images, and selfcare practices', *Journal of Consumer Research* 22 (1995), 139-153; C. Heyes, 'Foucault Goes to Weight Watchers', *Hypatia A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 21.2 (2006), 126-149; K. Besio and S. Marusek, 'Losing it in Hawai'i: Weight Watchers and the paradoxical nature of weight gain and loss', *Gender, Place & Culture* 22.6 (2015) 851-866.

Research method

In order to examine the representations of women in the 1960s and 1980s, I studied forty-four television advertisements shown in the US. I selected twenty-two adverts from either decade, excluding the decade in between. I chose not to use any advertisements from the decade of the 1970s as this was a time of huge social, technological and economic change and I chose to examine the periods both before and after this time. As I am looking specifically for differences in representation of women, I felt that this would give the adverts enough time to adjust to social changes that had occurred and thus provide more significant results. The fact that both sets of data contained twenty-two advertisements is a happy accident. Originally, I had twenty-three advertisements from the earlier period but one was excluded as I later found that the sound quality was not good enough to determine exactly what was said at all points.

I used only advertisements where both the video clip and audio file were of sound quality. I did not include advertisements that sold a product such as a diet pill or vitamin, as the focus of this project was to be specifically on drinks and foodstuffs. I was interested in the ways in which taste and the very act of consuming foods played into representations of women and felt that diet pills could not fully encompass this. These advertisements had to be television commercials promoting a health or weight loss food or drink, which had been recorded and distributed in either decade. I did not aim to pick out advertisements that solely featured or targeted women. Despite this, I found that only 4.5 percent of the diet and weight loss advertisements in my study were targeted towards men. Advertisements I analysed included those for liquid diet foods, ready meals, low calorie fizzy drinks, milk, breakfast cereals and oats, fruit juices, salad dressings, bread, dessert and chewing gum. It should also be noted that some brands are represented by more than one advertisement. In the 1980s portion, three advertisements were for Weight Watchers foods and in the 1960s portion, Metrecal liquid food appeared three times. I acknowledge that this may sway results somewhat, however, the increased prevalence of these adverts may suggest they were more representative to some extent.
The advertisements I used came from video archives including The Huntley Archives, Duke University Archives Digital Collections, the Internet

Archive, Clipland and YouTube.[7] These online digitised archives are public and provide fantastic visual detail. However, there are drawbacks to using this type of primary source. For all of the archives it can be difficult to know where the commercial was aired and how many people the commercial reached. In addition, particularly for both Clipland and YouTube it is not always easy to gain precise meta-data such as the exact year the advertisement was aired and who archived and uploaded it. They are both public video platforms and the fact that anyone can upload a video limits their authority. There is also no additional information about the content of the video or the creators, cast and crew, so many assumptions must be drawn from the visual aspects only.

However, the fact that these videos were uploaded onto a public platform in the first place hints at their significance and the thousands of views they have received gives credence to this. Usually videos that have public interest, such as those containing a popular product, celebrity or message are deemed interesting enough to be uploaded onto sites such as *YouTube*. As the period in question is not too far in the distant past, people may also upload commercials for nostalgic reasons. It might be reasonable to assume that due to the very fact that they exist on the platform, they are memorable, representative or noteworthy. The messages of video advertisements are clear and offer insights into both the consumer and the brand. They give some idea of the ways in which society perceived women at any given time and are not just about the appearance of the object for sale, 'but about personal appearances: how we look to others, how we think of ourselves.'[8] Commercials reflect the norms of society and specifically in this case, the gendered norms. Despite being one of the most public forms of media, advertising also has a way of connecting with us in intimate ways. It influences us privately.[9] This is particularly true of television commercials, which seep into our homes through TV sets.

[7] Huntley Film Archives, https://www.huntleyarchives.com/, accessed 17December 2018; Digital Repository: Duke University Archives, https://repository.duke.edu/dc, accessed 17 December 2018; Internet Archive California, https://archive.org/, accessed 18 December 2018; YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/, accessed 18 December 2018

[8] Barthel, *Putting on Appearances,* 1.

[9] J. Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertisements,* (New York 1978) 10.

In order to execute my research, I systematically analysed each advert, watching it multiple times and picking out key themes and images. I paid special attention to the gendered aspects of the voiceover, the presence of women, clothing, health and diet rhetoric, the demographic of protagonists and cast as well as the domestic vs. public setting in which the advertisements took place. I collected notes and developed score sheets, capturing the most crucial results and transforming them into tables and subsequently charts. Figure 1 shows a typical example of one of my score sheets. This particular score sheet was dated from the 1980s portion of my study.

Crystal Lite 1980	
Voice over	Male
Protagonist gender	Female
Protagonist age	25 – 35
Protagonist ethnicity	Caucasian
Presence of men	Yes – background dancers
Setting	Gym
Clothing	Lycra leotards, active wear, leg warmers, sweat bands
Notable props	Scales, active wear, rowing machine
Presence of scales	Yes
Key words/phrases	'I believe in me', 'eating right'
Presence of celebrity	No
Health/Appearance focused	Appearance
Taste rhetoric	'sweet in a whole new way', 'taste so terrific', 'natural flavours'
Jingle	Yes
Sex appeal	Yes
Presence of ethnic minorities	Yes
Health rhetoric	'no sugar', 'no saccharine', 'four calories a glass'

Fig. 1: Example score sheet

I wrote out the script from each advertisement and repeated the above score sheet, highlighting the main differences in all of the advertisements.

Most notable was the changing demographic of the advertisements. In later years, the advertisements featured much younger people on average (perhaps a reflection of growing populations of the young in an era of economic prosperity), there were more people present in advertisements (this perhaps indicated a move towards collective weight loss) and the role of the celebrity became increasingly important. Voiceovers became less predominantly male and women were increasingly sexualized in the later advertisements. Significant too is the sudden appearance of ethnic minorities in the later decade. They were completely missing from the earlier period. However, even in the 1980s portion of my study less than fourteen percent of adverts featured a non-white character, in total 93 percent of the adverts featured only characters that were white presenting. It is evident that a huge amount changed over this period in diet and weight-loss advertisements so with the limited space I have here, I picked out three key differences to discuss in greater depth. They are the gendered voice of authority, the emergence of the celebrity and the sexualisation of women through symbols and dress. These were chosen because they were some of the most striking and most obviously gendered changes that took place in the advertisements and also because they maintain much relevance today.

Women's emancipation and the gendered voice of authority

'Let's face it, an attractive woman can fib about her age but not about her weight', a male voiceover informs viewers of a 1966 television advertisement for D-Zerta Gelatin.[10] The voiceover attempts to shame women into buying this weight-loss product. Fatness is deemed unacceptable and an anonymous male voice insists on reminding female viewers of this fact. This advert is not an anomaly in its targeting of women; 95 percent of the advertisements in my study were targeted at the female sex. Through these advertisements, women are told what to buy, be, and do. An authoritative voiceover scolds them for their failings and praises them for their efforts. In this way, the voiceover acts as a parallel to the

[10] Traci0dee [Screen name], (22 June 2017) *1966 D-Zerta Gelatin* [Video File], retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2QqJxau, accessed 12 December 2018.

patriarchal control of women. Here, I will analyse some of the ways in which the voice of authority has changed over time and how far this can be explained by women's emancipation.

The voiceover is the audio clip that runs over the top of an advertisement, informing viewers of the details and benefits of the product on display. Particularly in the earlier portion of my study, they tended to take on an almost scientific tone. Take for example, one advert for Good Measure Diet Dinners in which the male voiceover exclaimed 'The Edward Dalton Company discovered how to actually control calories so each dinner is precisely three hundred calories.'[11] Here the words 'control' and 'calories' are used to lend clout to the health claims of the advertisement. The word 'control' also serves as a nod to the controlling measures that this male voice is applying to the female viewer. The fact that this voiceover is male is no accident. The consumer is kept in the position of a child, with the authoritative voice holding them in line.[12] This authoritative voice is present in advertisements throughout both decades of analysis. The gendered elements of which are particularly indicative of the way that society views men and women respectively - the male voiceover is associated with the male voice insofar as it speaks the voice of reason and logic, of proven fact.[13] As women gained more political, social and economic prominence, I had anticipated the male voiceover in diet and weight-loss advertisements would grow quieter. However, this was not entirely the case. Figure 2 illustrates my findings in relation to the gendered voiceover.

Voice over	**1960s**	**1980s**
Male	17	11
Female	0	3
Both	1	0
None	4	8

Fig. 2: The gender of voiceovers

[11] *Mead Johnson & Co.: Good Measure Diet Dinners, 1960s,* Duke University Libraries, (3 February 2011), [Video file] retrieved from: https://archive.org/details/dmbb04401, accessed 12 December 2018.
[12] Barthel, *Putting on Appearances*, 39.
[13] Ibidem*,* 45.

From those adverts in the 1960s, four had no voiceover. However, more than 94 percent of those leftover had a voiceover that was solely male. Only one out of all of the advertisements in the earlier decade included a female voiceover at all and she spoke only alongside her male counterpart. The advert in question was aired in 1967 for Sego Liquid Diet Food in which the female voiceover ran through health rhetoric and product specificities before finishing with an assurance that there were 'many, many tasty flavours'. As we later find out, she is able to speak with authority due to the fact that she has tried this product herself - we discover that she is our protagonist. However, the creators of this advertisement deem it crucial to include an additional male voice at the end of the video to add legitimacy, as though assuring the viewer that this woman is not mistaken.[14]

Unlike the female protagonist of the Sego advert, the authoritative nature of the male voiceover does not need justification. He is anonymous and yet his legitimacy permeates through his very gender. Through this 'passive imperative voice', women are told exactly what they should do and yet do not know who is telling them to do it.[15] By the 1980s, twice as many advertisements in my study than in the previous decade had no voiceover at all. While they were not in the majority, the declining use of this advertising technique indicates how it was falling out of favour. This change helped implement a newer representation of women, charged with more authority and more autonomy in their purchasing. The declining presence of the male voice is revealing of women's changing state in American society, the majority of which had taken place over the course of the 1970s. Women were becoming more visible and vocal in the political and social spheres of the United States and this is reflected in the gendered tone of advertisements.

Despite this transition, however, the declining role of this voice was limited, and my findings were disproportionate to the milestones made by feminists throughout the course of the decade in between. By the 1980s, only 14 percent of the adverts in my study featured a female voiceover. While a growth from nought percent is significant, it shows that female liberation still had a cap-off point as in the latter decade as 78 percent of voiceovers were still male. The reluctant and limited decline of the passive imperative voice adds credence to feminist theories relating to the control of women's

[14] Traci0dee [Screen name], (31 December 2007) *1967 Sego Liquid Diet Food* [Video File], retrieved from https://bit.ly/2QrikEk.

[15] R. Barthes, *The Fashion System*, trans. M. Ward and R. Howard (New York 1983).

bodies through food and diet culture.[16] Women had moved further into the workplace and had increasing access to various forms of media. They had achieved higher levels of social, economic and political emancipation and yet weight-loss and 'thinness' became increasingly important.[17] This attitude pervaded the 1980s and onwards leading Bartky and Bordo to advocate dieting as a patriarchal disciplinary practice.[18] The male voiceover was still pervasive in weight-loss advertisements and appeared to act as an instructor for women on how to perform an almost *Foucauldian* self-surveillance of their own bodies.[19]

However, a new type of authoritative voice was emerging, and she was female. Hollywood had been influencing body ideals since its very inception.[20] Yet the role of the celebrity was not wholly a negative one. It also helped to forge a new kind of voice of authority. Seven out of eight of the advertisements with no voiceover in the 1980s portion of my study featured women that were speaking for themselves – no voiceover necessary. The voice of authority had evolved and it was no longer an anonymous male. Female celebrities helped facilitate a new kind of autonomy for women in these adverts, standing-in for the male voiceover. In the 1960s half of this study, there was a female celebrity present in 9.1 percent of the commercials. By the 1980s 32 percent of the adverts contained a female celebrity. In a 1982 advertisement for milk, American model and actress Valerie Perrine sits on her sofa and talks to the camera as though confiding in a close friend. Milk is her secret, the Dairy Association sponsored advertisement reveals.[21] No male voice need confirm what the actress asserts, that milk will make you 'sleek and slinky.' This starkly contrasts earlier advertisements in which women's actions are dwarfed by the anonymous male voice. Take for example a 1960 advertisement for grapefruit juice, in which a slim woman swoons over her gardening and window cleaning while a male voice insists she should reach for some 'pure,

[16] Bordo, *Unbearable Weight Feminism*; Bartky, *Feminity and Domination*; Wolf, *The Beauty Myth*.
[17] S. Kern, *Anatomy and Destiny: A Cultural History of the Human Body* (1975) ix.
[18] Heyes, 'Foucault Goes to Weight Watchers', 127.
[19] For a Foucaldian analysis of weight-loss and the body, see: Thompson and Hirschman, 'Understanding the Socialized Body'.
[20] Foxcroft, *Calories and Corsets*.
[21] Robatsea2009 [Screen name], (6 September 2018) *Valerie Perrine for Milk 1982 TV spot*, [Video file] retrieved: https://bit.ly/2Q0L2MX, accessed 12 December 2018.

icy-cool grapefruit juice from Florida, so low in calories, a goldmine of goodness'.[22] In this earlier advert, the female protagonist does not speak and has no authority over her own dietary choices – the male voice of authority knows best.

The female celebrity might be viewed to some extent as symbolic of women's newfound emancipation – the public spaces they filled and the fact they were speaking for themselves act as significant markers. However, women's emancipation in this era was limited and so too was the role of the celebrity.[23] Factors such as a changing style of advertisements and more educated viewers that needed less explained to them may also be partly responsible for the changes that took place. However, the celebrity body of the 1980s, often in a bikini and visibly on display, demonstrated the increasingly pervasive attitude of the 1980s: sex sells. It was a marker not only of emancipation, but also of sexual liberation.

Sexual revolution, clothing and symbols

Since the mid to late 1950s incidences of gonorrhoea, births out of wedlock and teenage mothers began to rise dramatically in the United States.[24] It was the pre-cursor to the so-called 'sexual revolution' spurred on by the introduction of the contraceptive pill in May 1960 and improving health care systems, which lead to lower mortality during childbearing. College students captured the spirit of 1960s counterculture in slogans such as 'Make Love, not War' and 'Go With the Flow.'[25] Perhaps it is unsurprising then, that the use of sex and sexuality to sell diet and weight-loss products was one of the most striking changes in the advertisements in my two areas of study and heavily impacted representations of women. This section will discuss the clothing and also symbols used in commercials in both decades and how far they can be explained by the growing traction of the sexual revolution.

[22] traci0dee [Screen name] (3 March 2016), *1960 Grapefruit Juice*, [Video file] retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2rcRp12, accessed 17 December 2018.
[23] Wolf, *The Beauty Myth.*
[24] A. Francis, 'The Wages of Sin: How the Discovery of Pencillin Reshaped Modern Sexuality', *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 42.1 (2013) 5-13.
[25] K. Slack, 'Liberalism Radicalized: The Sexual Revolution, Multiculturalism, and the Rise of Identity Politics', *IssueLab: The Heritage Foundation* (2013).

Since the 1980s, critics have raged against the ways that advertising treats women, specifically scathing of the provocative ways they are often clothed (or not clothed) in order to sell products.[26] These commentators would have raged most fiercely against the diet advertisements in the latter portion of my study in which the most clear-cut symbolic differences stemmed from the ways in which both the protagonist and other cast members were dressed and portrayed through symbols and clothing. Of the former, one out of 22 advertisements featured a woman dressed in swimwear, contrasting the later adverts of which eight featured women clothed in bikinis and swimming costumes. All of the other adverts in the 1960s featured women that were fully dressed, with two out of 20 dressed in an apron, epitomising the domesticised perceptions of women at the time. One of these advertisements was for Coca-Cola and featured actress Connie Clausen, as seen in Image 2.[27]

Img 2: Connie Clausen for Coca-Cola. Source: Sangroncito [Screen name] (13 December 2008), *Coke Keeps you thin! (1961 Coke commercial)* [Video file].

[26] Zimmerman & Dahlberg, *Sexual Objectification of Women in Advertising*, 71.
[27] Sangroncito [Screen name] (13 December 2008), *Coke Keeps you thin! (1961 Coke commercial)* [Video file], retrieved: https://bit.ly/2SVL3Px, accessed 18 December 2018.

Not only clad in an apron but also mending clothes, she characterises the trope of the 1950s housewife, which carried over into the following decade. On the other hand, Figure 3 indicates how the apron, while having a limited presence in the earlier advertisements, fell completely out of favour in later years. The change in dress characterises the changing way that society perceived and portrayed women. Particularly noteworthy is the increasing acceptability of showing women wearing less and less. Of adverts in the later period, 36 percent featured women scantily clad in swimming costumes and leotards. If women of the past proved their dedication to healthy eating in the kitchen, women in the later decade were plucked from the kitchen and placed beside the pool. Their bodies, fully on display, acted as symbols of their dedication to both health and femininity.

Clothing type	**1960s**	**1980s**
Tightly-fitted dress	5	2
Swimwear	1	8
Work wear	0	1
Active clothes	1	5
Apron	2	0
None of the above	13	6

Fig. 3: Women's clothing in advertisements

The sexualisation of these women was overt. Certainly, sex appeared to dominate the adverts of the 1980s. Image 3 displays one Diet Pepsi advert in which the protagonist was equated to the drink item on display. The advertisement, mirroring others of the time, oozed with sex appeal as viewers witnessed a montage of a slender, oiled-up woman sucking Pepsi through a straw and winking at the camera. In between every shot of this woman the camera cuts to the Pepsi bottle. As she drops her bathrobe, the camera cuts to the packaging being peeled away from the straw. The camera cuts back to our protagonist dropping into a swimming pool in slow motion and the following shot shows a straw dropping into a bottle of fizzy Pepsi in slow motion.[28] The drink and the straw are personified, and the

[28] MrClassicAds1980s [Screen name] (15 April 2011), *Diet Pepsi One Small Calorie commercial 1980s*, [Video file] retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2QzcXDh, accessed 15 December 2018.

protagonist is objectified through this comparison. Both of them are sexualised as an audio track makes 'Ooh' and 'Aah' noises overhead.

Not only does the advertisement infer that viewers will get a body like the model seen in Image 3 (a voiceover also asserts that the product contains just one small calorie), but it also appeals to the viewer through its sexualisation of the protagonist. In order to pertain whether a particular advertisement was using sex to sell its products, I concluded that it must contain one or more of the following: suggestive movements and behaviours, suggestive noises or rhetoric, phallic imagery or a particular emphasis on body parts as opposed to characters. Those adverts containing women with little clothing on must be paired with another factor to be included. For example, an advertisement showing celebrity Paula Warner in a bikini was not included. Despite having her body on show, there was no sexually suggestive rhetoric or imagery. Using this model, I found that fifty percent of the advertisements in the later period used sex to sell as opposed to only 13.6 percent in the 1960s.

Img. 3: Diet Pepsi advert. Source: MrClassicAds1980s [Screen name] (15 April 2011), *Diet Pepsi One Small Calorie commercial 1980s*, [Video file].

The changing portrayal of women in these adverts from housewife to sex object shows the limitations on female emancipation at this time, but it also indicates the pervasiveness of the sexual revolution. While the sexual

revolution freed women from traditional roles and is viewed by many as a breakthrough in the emancipation of female sexuality, the sexualisation of women in the media and in public brought with it new problems.[29] Where the earlier adverts appeared to indicate that a woman ought to be slim in order to find a man and thus be socially acceptable, later adverts indicated that a woman should be sexually appealing in order to conform to societal standards.[30] Iconic images from the 1960s such as the women that graced the pages of the newly popular *Playboy Magazine* and pageant contestants that competed in their bikinis are reminiscent of the women in these diet and weight-loss advertisements.[31] Research has shown that both *Playboy* centrefolds and Miss America contestants from the 1960s onwards fell substantially below normative weights.[32]

Women had transformed from consumers charged with being the perfect wife to consumers charged with embodying the sexualised ideal. The sexualised woman in diet and weight-loss adverts of the 1980s pushed a new standardised body image onto female viewers. This was exacerbated by the increasing appearance of female celebrities that were often portrayed in their swimming costumes or in small and revealing active wear – a total contrast to sixties celebrity Connie Clausen in her apron. In a 1980 advert for Diet Faygo, a popular fizzy diet drink, Hollywood actresses Joan Rivers and Paula Warner sit beside the pool. 'If I drink this, will I look like you?' Joan asks Paula. When Paula confirms that she will, Joan shrieks before trying to drink the entire glass.[33]

[29] C. Wouters, 'Balancing Sex and Love Since the 1960s Sexual Revolution', *Theory, Culture & Society* 15 (1998) 3-4.
[30] See Duke University Archives, *Good Measure Diet Dinners,* [Video file] retrieved from: https://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adviews_good_measure/, accessed 15 December 2018.
[31] D. Farber, *The 1960s Chronicles* (California 2007) 30.
[32] D.M. Garner et al., 'Cultural Expectations of Thinness in Women', *Psychological Reports* 47 (1980), 483-91; C.V. Wiseman et al., 'Cultural Expectations of Thinness in Women: An Update', *International Journal of Eating Disorders* 11 (1992) 85-89.
[33] robatsea2009 [Screen name] (16 December 2011), *Joan Rivers for Diet Faygo 1980 Television Commercial* [Video file], retrieved from: https://bit.ly/2Ubv5Sx, accessed: 16 December 2018.

Img. 4: Diet Faygo advert with Joan Rivers and Paula Warner. Source: YouTube

As seen in Image 4, Paula's body is shown off in a small bikini, while Joan covers herself with a kaftan, an oversized loose dress.[34] The kaftan acts as a barrier, preventing the viewer from seeing Joan's body. This plays to the idea of an idealised 'bikini body' as promoted in advertisements even today. Paula exemplifies popular ideas of how a toned, celebrity body should be on full display; it is something to be desired and chased after. If you have a body that is not toned (in this case supposedly Joan's) you should cover it up until you have achieved the desirable body. This representation of women and their bodies is extremely telling.

When I grouped together both women that were clothed in swimwear and in active wear in the 1980s portion of my study, I found that almost sixty percent of these women in total were portrayed in an athletic capacity. Those clothed in either active wear or swimming costumes had significant amounts of skin on show compared with the mainly modest clothing of the earlier advertisements. Women that were featured in swimming costumes or active wear all displayed muscular, idealized body types. This focus on the athletic, sexualised female body exposed an amplified American individualism that was typical of the 1980s. The

[34] Ibidem.

sexualised female protagonist was emblematic not only of the sexual revolution, but she may also be viewed as a product of wider societal changes within the US - changes that lead to an atmosphere of self-improvement. What it means to be successful became rendered most visible in the lean and muscular bodies produced in fitness clubs.[35]

Conclusion

Not only was the appearance of overtly sexualised bodies a consequence of the sexual revolution and the resultant visibility of the female body, but it can also be related to women's improving economic circumstances. Now, for the first time, women had time to pay excessive attention to their physique and had the money to fund the latest diet fad. The defining factors of change mentioned here only just scratch the surface. Significant changes occurred over the course of the period of study, particularly in regards to the representation of women. Women moved from the domestic into the public sphere, the role of the doting housewife all but disappeared and more provocative clothing resulted from women's newfound sexual liberation. As my research has distinguished, women's liberation movements and the sexual revolution had a huge impact on the portrayal of women in these advertisements. So too did the economic advancements made both by society and by individual women at this time. Disposable incomes meant women had more time and money and this also influenced the types of products that were available on the market. Of course, women's emancipation economically, socially and sexually was limited in this time period. Diet and weight loss culture was instrumental in this limitation through its manipulation of women and their bodies. In this way, my research is somewhat paradoxical. Progressive drivers of change for women in advertisements from 1960 to 1989 influenced the very adverts that worked to simultaneously undermine them.

The celebrity acted both as a constraint on women and their fulfilment, and also as an advocator for emancipation and a new gendered

[35] C. Burr '"The Closest Thing to Perfect": Celebrity and the body politics of Jamie Lee Curtis' in C. Warsh ed., *Gender, Health, and Popular Culture: Historical Perspectives* (Waterloo 2011) 218; for exploration of the 'normalized body', also see E. Purce, 'Scales of Normality: Displays of Extreme Weight and Weight Loss in Blackpool 1920 – 1940', *Cultural and Social History* 15.5 (2017).

voice of authority. Sexual liberation meant that women had more freedom to enjoy their bodies and yet also resulted in their bodies being increasingly objectified and capitalised on. Representations of women in diet and weight loss adverts shifted with societal understandings and portrayals of women over the course of the three decades. However, as Oprah and her wagon of fat symbolise, the heavy load of weight-loss culture was far from shaken away from women by the end of the 1980s. Despite their changing portrayal, they continued to be overrepresented in advertisements that demand they conform to a set of socially approved body ideals. Some adverts have historically demanded that women remain slim and others have called for women to put on weight.[36] Either way, they nod to the on-going self-discipline and control of women that is measured through their body shape.

[36] Janae, '1950s Weight Gain Ads and their Rhetoric', *Mine is The Night*, retrieved from: https://janaealycem.wordpress.com/2013/03/26/1950s-weight-gain-ads-and-their-rhetoric/, accessed 17 December 2018.